



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Sixth session

New York, 17-19 July 2013

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: round table 1

Economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat**

Introduction

1. The world's more than 1 billion persons with disabilities, comprising approximately 15 per cent of the global population, constitute a significant group that can contribute to development and society, and yet their potential has not always been realized because of existing barriers. Many of those of working age — at least 780 million people — face physical, social, economic and cultural barriers that hinder their access to education, skills development, employment, health services and, more broadly, society on an equal basis with others. Evidence shows that persons with disabilities are at greater risk of poverty than persons without disabilities in both developed and developing countries.¹ A constant state of poverty or precariousness, reduced economic resilience and repeated economic shocks from a lack of coverage for needed goods and services are the norm for many. Many also face significant constraints to owning assets, such as land, or to obtaining access to credit. They are also very often denied a voice and power in the political process, and there is a lack of attention to their rights.

* CRPD/CSP/2013/1.

** Compiled on the basis of contributions by the International Labour Organization and other sources to facilitate the discussions during round table 1, to be held on 17 July 2013.

¹ Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Keeping the promise: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond" (A/65/173); see also Rebecca Yeo, *Chronic Poverty and Disability*, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper No. 4 (Somerset, United Kingdom, Action on Disability and Development, 2001) and World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).



2. While reliable comparable data on labour market participation by persons with disabilities are scarce, common patterns are reported in countries at different levels of development. Compared with non-disabled persons, persons with disabilities are less likely to be in full-time employment; more likely to be unemployed; and significantly more likely to be economically inactive. In developing countries, they are more likely to work in the informal economy. When in employment, workers with disabilities are more likely to count among the working poor, as they are frequently in low-paying precarious jobs with poor career prospects and working conditions and limited or no pension and health benefits. Women with disabilities are less likely to have a decent job than either women without disabilities or men with disabilities, and persons with certain types of disability, including intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, face greater barriers in finding and retaining employment.
3. Persons with disabilities are also economically worse off and at greater risk of poverty than non-disabled persons, in particular where they are not provided with adequate social protection. These patterns reflect untapped human resources that, if adequate measures were taken, could contribute to sustainable development efforts at the local, regional and national levels. An International Labour Organization (ILO) pilot study of 10 low- and middle-income developing countries found that the loss to gross domestic product (GDP) from the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market is estimated to be between 3 and 7 per cent of GDP.² On the other hand, returns to society from investment in more effective strategies for inclusion are recognized. For example, in Australia, it was predicted that a cumulative \$43 billion increase in GDP over the period 2011-2021 would result if the unemployment and labour force participation gaps between persons with and without disabilities were reduced by one third.³
4. While many countries have made significant progress in the past two decades in improving access to health services and education, both income and non-income inequalities have grown in many parts of the world. For example, in some countries where there has been a significant increase in children's attendance at primary schools, the rate of attendance of children with disabilities remains extremely low, meaning that the gap has increased. The rapid economic expansion in the past two to three decades has not automatically translated into human development for everyone.⁴ The benefits of this growth have largely gone to those at the top of the income distribution, as well as to highly skilled workers. Furthermore, many persons with disabilities were affected by the series of global crises experienced in recent years, including the food and energy crisis, the financial and economic crisis and the ongoing public debt crisis in the euro area, as well as the effects of ongoing climate change.
5. In response to these multiple challenges, it has become even more imperative to pursue development strategies that include social, economic and environmental policies to empower excluded social groups. These include persons with disabilities, who are disproportionately located at the margins of the formal labour market and are

² Sebastian Buckup, *The Price of Exclusion: The Economic Consequences of Excluding People with Disabilities from the World of Work*, Employment Working Paper No. 43 (Geneva, ILO, 2009).

³ Deloitte Access Economics, "The economic benefits of increasing employment for people with disability", report commissioned by the Australian Network on Disability (Sydney, 2011).

⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2013: The Rise of the South — Human Progress in a Diverse World* (New York, 2013).

denied equality of opportunity when it comes to essential public goods and services, such as education, health and accessible and user-friendly public infrastructure (e.g. transportation and buildings). Improvements in these areas, including the provision of basic social protection, have been shown to enhance the capabilities and participation of persons with disabilities, reduce isolation and economic precarity and improve their living standards and, by implication, those of their families and communities.⁵ Such positive measures as quotas or reservations in public procurement could also provide strong leverage for the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities.

6. The present paper provides an overview of the international normative framework relating to the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through employment, social protection and poverty reduction. The paper also reviews the work of United Nations entities to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in those areas. It identifies key issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the voices of persons with disabilities living in poverty are heard and their needs are met through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies.

7. The term “empowerment”, as used in the present paper, refers to a concept that has been used in United Nations forums for a number of years (see the report of the Secretary-General on promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all (E/CN.5/2013/3)). People, especially from marginalized social groups, such as persons with disabilities, can be empowered through their effective engagement in economic, social and political life; the provision of adequate resources and assets; and the flexibility to exercise choice and control over their rights and well-being.

8. The economic empowerment of persons with disabilities can be achieved if they have access to jobs and livelihoods and to basic entitlements, such as education, health services and housing. In turn, economic participation facilitates the social integration of persons with disabilities.

Normative frameworks

9. Policy guidance on the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies is provided both by principal international human rights instruments concerning persons with disabilities and by international norms and standards pertaining to social protection, including ILO social security standards. Together, these instruments provide the normative basis for fostering the empowerment and full inclusion of persons with disabilities in society.

10. The general principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include equality of opportunity, non-discrimination and equality between men and women (article 3). The Convention obliges States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy all human rights on an equal basis with others and to take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of those rights without discrimination. Provisions of specific relevance to poverty reduction include article 24, on the right to education, article 27, on the right to work and employment, and article 28, on the right to an adequate standard of living and social

⁵ World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability*.

protection. Of particular relevance to poverty reduction through decent work are provisions requiring States parties to promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business. Also of relevance are provisions relating to access to State assistance with disability-related expenses, such as training and counselling; to affordable services and devices for disability-related needs; and to poverty reduction programmes (article 28).

11. Promoting access for persons with disabilities to vocational rehabilitation, skills development and employment as a means of improving their standard of living is an underlying aim of a number of ILO standards relating to persons with disabilities. These include Recommendation No. 99 concerning vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons; the Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (Convention No. 159) and its accompanying Recommendation No. 168; and the Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace (2001).

12. With regard to social protection, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. States should safeguard and promote the realization of their right to social protection without discrimination on the basis of disability, including equal access to appropriate and affordable services and devices for and other assistance with disability-related needs, social protection and poverty reduction programmes, assistance with disability-related expenses, public housing programmes and retirement benefits and programmes.

13. ILO social security standards include a number of conventions and recommendations. The instrument adopted most recently is Recommendation No. 202 concerning national floors of social protection, which provides guidance to member States in establishing and maintaining nationally defined social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems.⁶ Such social protection floors should guarantee, at the least, effective access to essential health care, education and nutrition security, as well as a basic level of income security throughout the life course, as defined at the national level. Some of the principles set out in the Recommendation are of particular relevance for persons with disabilities, including the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and responsiveness to special needs, as well as respect for the rights and dignity of people covered by the social security guarantees.

Work of the United Nations

14. The efforts of the United Nations system to promote economic empowerment through poverty reduction strategies and inclusive social protection reflect its commitment to the realization of human rights and the promotion of economic and social progress for all.

15. The General Assembly has, in recent years, repeatedly expressed concern that persons with disabilities continue to be subject to multiple or aggravated forms of

⁶ ILO, *Social Security for All: Building Social Protection Floors and Comprehensive Social Security Systems* (Geneva, 2012).

discrimination and have remained largely invisible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals (see General Assembly resolutions 65/186, 66/124 and 67/140). It has therefore urged for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities by, inter alia, explicitly including and mainstreaming disability issues and persons with disabilities in national plans and tools designed to contribute to the full realization of the Goals and enabling persons with disabilities to participate as agents and beneficiaries of development by ensuring that programmes and policies, including those for poverty eradication, are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities.

16. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the focal point on disability within the United Nations system, supports relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes with a view to mainstreaming disability in development, including through its analytical work, the implementation of catalytic projects to support the capacity-building of Member States, and collaboration with multi-stakeholders in both disability and development communities around the world.

17. In 2007, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was established within the United Nations to promote compliance with the principles of the Convention and increase the scale and effectiveness of United Nations involvement in disability issues. The Group adopted a statement of commitment to the Convention, operationalized through a joint strategy and plan of action, to support States in their implementation of the Convention and promote disability inclusion in development and society.⁷ With a view to mainstreaming disability throughout the work of the United Nations, the Inter-Agency Support Group collaborated with the United Nations Development Group in the development of a guidance note on including the rights of persons with disabilities in United Nations programming at the country level.

18. Many United Nations entities have been involved in developing resource materials, providing policy advice, building capacity and implementing technical cooperation projects to alleviate and eradicate poverty in individuals with disabilities and to empower them to fully participate in development and in all aspects of society.⁸

19. With regard to social protection, one of the key instruments of joint action across the United Nations system has been the Social Protection Floor Initiative, adopted in April 2009 as one of nine joint initiatives to respond to the challenges of the global financial, economic and social crisis. The Initiative fosters coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other development partners under the joint leadership of ILO and the World Health Organization. The social protection floor is an integrated approach towards strengthening social and economic development and realizing human rights and has been widely recognized and accepted in numerous international, regional and national forums. In the national context, a social protection floor comprises: (a) universal access to essential services (e.g. health, education, housing, water and sanitation and other services, as nationally defined); and (b) social transfers in cash or in kind, to ensure income security, food security, adequate nutrition and access to essential services. Consequently, national social protection floors are of particular

⁷ See www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=45&pid=323.

⁸ See www.un.org/disabilities/documents/iasg/iasg_compilation_resources.pdf.

relevance for ensuring inclusive social protection for people with disabilities.⁹ The Human Rights Council recognized this in a recent resolution on the work and employment of persons with disabilities (Human Rights Council resolution 22/3, para. 5 (j)).

Economic empowerment through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies

20. Economic empowerment is widely recognized as a key factor for enhancing the autonomy of persons with disabilities and their full participation in society. Measures to foster the participation of persons with disabilities in decent employment, reduce poverty and enhance income security are among the core elements of strategies that should be adopted by countries as they take action to implement their commitments, including the internationally agreed development goals, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Strategies need to be developed and implemented in consultation with persons with disabilities so that their voices are heard and their concerns appropriately addressed.

21. Available evidence on the higher risk of poverty faced by persons with disabilities indicates that policies promoting access to education, health care and employment are particularly important in improving the well-being of persons with disabilities and their households and in enabling them to rise out of poverty.

22. In this context, progressively building national social protection floors and comprehensive social protection systems that explicitly include all people with disabilities and respond to their specific needs will contribute to the realization of human rights and the fostering of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and society.

23. In developing such policies, strategies and measures, account should be taken of possible barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities. These may include a lack of information about employment and training opportunities, entitlements and available life-changing supports; the inaccessibility of workplaces and public transport; stereotypes and prejudices about their capabilities and contributions; or a lack of consideration of the situations of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of the programme. Effective consultation and involvement at the outset and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms that are sensitive to disability issues can help to detect such obstacles and provide a solid evidence base for subsequent policy reforms.

24. Elements of social protection systems that explicitly respond to the needs of persons with disabilities include schemes or programmes that provide income support to persons with disabilities and their families (e.g. disability-related cash transfer programmes, other forms of social assistance or disability pensions), social health protection and other mechanisms to ensure universal health coverage, schemes and programmes that support the integration or reintegration of persons with disabilities into the labour market and facilitate their participation in employment. In this respect, financial support to cover the disability-related costs associated with participation in employment can help to overcome poverty traps and to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in productive employment.

⁹ Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization* (Geneva, ILO, 2011).

25. Policies and strategies to enhance the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities should also consider the mechanisms available to support the participation of children with disabilities in education and vocational training programmes. If effective measures are taken to equip persons with disabilities with adequate education and skills, they will find it easier to participate in decent employment at a later stage. Similarly, opportunities should be developed so that adults with disabilities have access to vocational rehabilitation, skills development and lifelong learning to facilitate their return to work following the acquisition of a disability. The needs of older workers with disabilities should also be taken into account, in particular in contexts where the lack of adequate pensions for a large proportion of the population necessitates continued engagement in employment well into old age. The specific experiences of poverty and/or precariousness of persons with disabilities should be taken into account. Specific programmes targeted at women and indigenous persons with disabilities to increase decent employment and ensure safe and healthy working environments are needed to address intersecting forms of discrimination and economic disadvantages where they exist.

26. The initial discussions regarding international development priorities for the period beyond 2015 suggest that the promotion of decent employment and social protection are key elements of an emerging post-2015 international development framework. Such discussions provide an opportunity to increase the enjoyment by persons with disabilities of equal rights, empower persons with disabilities economically and ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection systems and poverty reduction strategies in the development framework.

Questions for consideration

27. The following questions are presented for consideration:

- What measures have been taken by Member States to ensure that their national development policies and programmes promote the rights and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through inclusive social protection policies and poverty reduction strategies?
- Please share examples of measures taken by Member States to better address the needs of persons with disabilities in poverty reduction strategies and facilitate their access to social protection where needed.
- To what extent do measures taken by Member States ensure that their national social protection systems cover persons with disabilities without discrimination and that their special disability-related needs are being met?
- What should be included or further enhanced in development policies with respect to designing, implementing and monitoring inclusive social protection policies and poverty reduction strategies?
- What measures should be proposed by the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities to ensure that internationally agreed goals for the post-2015 development framework adequately address inequality and the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction strategies?



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**Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:
round table 2**

Disability-inclusive development in national, regional and international processes

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat**

Introduction

1. Since its inception, the United Nations has been promoting an inclusive and equitable society built on diversity and equal opportunities for all. The international community has continuously been making efforts towards this goal through the adoption and implementation of a series of international instruments specifically on disability, including the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982), the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and, most recently, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex).

2. The Convention guides the international normative framework for the advancement of persons with disabilities in society and development. In the preamble to the Convention, the States parties emphasize the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development. Article 32, paragraph 1, specifically speaks to the need for international development programmes to be inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities, further setting out the responsibilities of States parties.

3. However, gaps between policy and practice, as well as challenges in mainstreaming efforts, remain. Disability has been largely invisible in the major internationally agreed development frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and in follow-up efforts for their implementation and

* CRPD/CSP/2013/1.

** Prepared to facilitate the discussions during round table 2, to be held on 18 July 2013.



evaluation. Tangible progress on the inclusion of persons with disabilities remains limited. Persons with disabilities still face multiple barriers and numerous obstacles to their full and equal participation in development.

4. As the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals draws near, the international community is increasingly recognizing the urgency and importance of including disability in development. In recent years, the General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions on realizing the Goals for persons with disabilities (see resolutions 62/127, 63/150, 64/131, 65/186, 66/124 and 67/140). In its resolution 63/150, the Assembly reaffirmed the need to include and integrate the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development efforts, without which the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, would not be genuinely achieved. More recently, in its resolution 66/124, the Assembly decided to convene a High-level Meeting, on 23 September 2013, with the overarching theme "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond", in order to strengthen efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.

5. In his report entitled "Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (A/67/211), the Secretary-General referred to the following four priority areas for mainstreaming disability in development: (a) strengthening and applying the international normative framework on disability; (b) promoting accessibility for inclusive and sustainable development; (c) addressing gaps in capacity-building; and (d) assessing the situation of persons with disabilities: inclusive monitoring and evaluation frameworks. These priority areas are essential for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development for all.

6. Ongoing preparatory processes towards the post-2015 development agenda could provide crucial entry points for ensuring that disability perspectives become an integral part of the development agenda, subsequently narrowing the gap between policy and practice and helping to realize the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

Progress achieved and challenges encountered in furthering disability-inclusive development

7. Mainstreaming disability in development at all levels is a strategy to promote inclusive, sustainable and equitable development for all. The United Nations has long taken a leading role in highlighting the urgent need to mainstream disability in policy implementation and programme development. In recent years, there has been some progress in this regard. However, there continues to be a major backlog in terms of including disability in international development frameworks, as well as in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The need to coordinate efforts to include disability in development action has been voiced and grown stronger. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have become more important for resource sharing and knowledge dissemination, as well as for building capacity for practical action on the inclusion of disability on the ground.

8. At the global level, in 2010, during its second five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly called for action to promote

the inclusion of people with disabilities in productive employment and decent work and their equitable access to economic opportunities and social services. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development it was highlighted that sustainable development requires the involvement of persons with disability (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). In 2013, during its fifty-first session, the Commission for Social Development further underscored the need for persons with disabilities to be included in processes that affect their lives and to benefit from equal opportunities to live independent and productive lives.

9. More recently, the General Assembly, in its resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (resolution 67/226, para. 23), provides a clear mandate for United Nations country teams to support activities that promote the inclusion of disability in programmatic work, including in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to achieve national development priorities.

10. At the national level, Member States are increasingly adopting a wide array of approaches to including disability in development efforts, such as through the development of disability-inclusive and responsive national plans and strategies. International development cooperation initiatives too are increasingly becoming sensitive to disability issues, taking into account accessibility for all and the need to provide social services that are responsive to the situation of persons with disabilities.

11. In this context, a twin-track approach may be considered for strategies that aim to promote the inclusion of disability with a view to empowering persons with disabilities through enhanced personal agency and making opportunities more equitable in various domains.¹ First, there should be equal access for persons with disabilities to mainstream systems and services. Interventions in this regard focus on improving accessibility, removing barriers and making reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities in public transportation, built environments and communications, as well as in education and health care, to facilitate individual autonomy and participation in the community. Second, targeted interventions should be implemented to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities so that they are able to participate in society and development by providing training and rehabilitation services. For both aspects, accessibility and coordination among all stakeholders is crucial, as is the need to take into account the local and cultural contexts in which persons with disabilities live.

12. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships involving Governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders, progress is becoming possible. Challenges remain, however, when it comes to including disability in major development policy frameworks and development efforts at all levels and, therefore, when it comes to making a real change in the lives of persons with disabilities. Some major contributing factors are: the lack of inclusion of disability in development policies and programmes or in related processes and mechanisms; the lack of resources to implement and sustain disability-inclusive initiatives; negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities; inadequate and

¹ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Department for International Development, *Disability, Poverty and Development* (London, 2000).

inaccessible social service provision and the compounding issue of service delivery limitations; and the dearth of reliable data and evidence on the situation of persons with disabilities.

13. Specific enablers are required for disability-inclusive development to occur.² Change need not be only about laws and policies, but could also involve institutions and the monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes to understand, by using a "disability lens", how disability affects the whole of society. In order to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development and to see improvements in terms of accessibility of physical environments and information and communication technologies, a change in cultural attitudes is also needed.

Ways forward: opportunities to further promote the inclusion of disability in development processes at all levels before 2015 and beyond

14. In its resolution 65/1, the General Assembly addressed progress made in the implementation of the eight development goals emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration and associated commitments and requested that recommendations be made for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

15. Efforts to date on the post-2015 development agenda suggest that the advancement of persons with disabilities remains a peripheral concern. But the increasing recognition of disability as a cross-cutting development issue also represents opportunities for the fuller inclusion of disability.

16. The year 2013 presents a historic opportunity for the inclusion of disability in development beyond 2015. The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development, organized at the level of Heads of State and Government, will be held on 23 September 2013 with the overarching theme "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond" (see resolution 66/124). The outcome of the High-level Meeting could advance the implementation of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities and ensure the inclusion of disability in the emerging post-2015 development agenda, framework and processes by identifying strategic entry points and collaborative partnerships for implementation.

17. At the international level, there are ongoing intergovernmental processes and mechanisms, such as the open working group mandated by the General Assembly to prepare a proposal on sustainable development goals for consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see resolution 66/288, annex, para. 248). Other related processes for identifying priorities and helping to reach consensus on a post-2015 development agenda are presented in the annex. These processes should be open to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, address pressing challenges and recognize opportunities to take action for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for all.

² World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).

18. In addition, national consultations in over 100 countries are being conducted to exchange ideas and create a shared vision of the international development agenda beyond 2015.³

19. It is expected that current multi-stakeholder consultations could further promote the explicit inclusion of disability in emerging post-2015 development frameworks with specific results for action to create a genuinely inclusive society and development for all.

Questions for consideration

20. The following questions are presented for consideration:

- Which options have proved effective in overcoming obstacles and barriers to mainstreaming disability in development?
- The current development processes provide opportunities to further include disability in development. Which specific entry points exist for incorporating disability in the post-2015 international development frameworks?
- How should the inclusion of disability in development be monitored and evaluated?
- The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development will be held in September 2013. What concrete measures and actions should be taken by Member States, the United Nations, development agencies and civil society to implement the outcome of the High-level Meeting and follow up in furthering the inclusion of disability in development in all processes, at all levels?

³ Information on countries where national consultations are ongoing is available from www.worldwewant2015.org/sitemap.

Annex

Select international processes relevant to discussions on a post-2015 development framework

<i>Process</i>	<i>Focus/priority themes/purpose</i>	<i>Date</i>
International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building	Share peacebuilding and State-building experiences Gather and discuss good practices and constraints to delivering effective international assistance in support of peacebuilding and State-building Identify a realistic set of objectives for peacebuilding and State-building that could guide national and international partners Build trust between participating countries and organizations	Ongoing
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	The eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in 2012, served as the meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action works towards a new climate change agreement, to be finalized in 2015	Ongoing
Commission for Social Development	Promoting the empowerment of people to achieve poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all	February 2013
Commission on the Status of Women	Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls	March 2013
2012 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Under the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals"	July 2013
Second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	Take stock of the main achievements of the Global Forum on Migration and Development process and address the relationship between the Global Forum and the United Nations	Second half of 2013

<i>Process</i>	<i>Focus/priority themes/purpose</i>	<i>Date</i>
Second International Conference on Nutrition	Review progress made since 1992, reflect on new and existing challenges and opportunities presented by changes in the global economy and the food system and by advances in science and technology and analyse policy options for improving nutrition	2013
2013 high-level segment and annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Under the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals"	1-4 July 2013
Special event organized by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (to be confirmed)	As requested by Member States in "Keeping the promise, united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (General Assembly resolution 65/1, para. 79)	2013/2014 (to be confirmed)
Commission on the Status of Women	Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls	March 2014
Fourth Development Cooperation Forum	The 2014 Development Cooperation Forum will focus on the role of development cooperation in a post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Participants in the Forum could make contributions to the discussion on the post-2015 agenda	July 2014
2014 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council	Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future	July 2014
2014 special session of the General Assembly to review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development adopted in 1994	Review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, assess current population and development issues and identify areas for the implementation of the Programme of Action beyond 2014 on the basis of the ongoing comprehensive operational review of such implementation	September 2014

<i>Process</i>	<i>Focus/priority themes/purpose</i>	<i>Date</i>
World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Under the theme "Learning today for a sustainable future", the event will mark the end of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. A review of the implementation of the decade will draw out the relevance of education for sustainable development for the post-2014 education and sustainable development agendas	November 2014
Comprehensive 10-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries	General review conference focusing on issues relevant to landlocked developing countries	2014
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples	To share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	2014
World Conference on Education for All	Assessment of progress made in the achievement of the six education for all goals and discussion on a way forward for education	April 2015
2015 special session of the General Assembly to review the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005	Review based on the results from two high-level meetings, one organized by UNESCO in 2013 and one by the International Telecommunication Union in 2014	September 2015
Third World Conference on Disaster Reduction	To review implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster and to facilitate the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/199	2015

<i>Process</i>	<i>Focus/priority themes/purpose</i>	<i>Date</i>
Commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women	(To be confirmed)	2015 (To be confirmed)
Ten-year review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	International meeting to review implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	2015
High-level midterm review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020	Review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, with a special focus on official development assistance commitments and on enhancing the resources of least developed countries. The review will cover the priority areas for action set out in the Programme of Action: (a) productive capacity; (b) agriculture, food security and rural development; (c) trade; (d) commodities; (e) human and social development; (f) multiple crises and other emerging challenges; (g) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building; and (h) good governance at all levels	2015/2016

Source: United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, "Realizing the future we want for all: report to the Secretary-General" (New York, United Nations, 2012).



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**Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:
informal panel**

Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for inclusive society

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat**

Introduction

1. Available data indicates that persons with disabilities have generally poorer health, have less opportunities with regard to education and economic participation and are at greater risk of poverty than the general population¹ owing to discrimination and barriers in their environments.²
2. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation, which aims to combat exclusion and inequalities and to change attitudes towards persons with disabilities, was initiated by the World Health Organization in the 1980s. It is a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, poverty reduction, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities.³ Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation initiatives are currently being implemented in over 90 countries throughout the world, mostly in developing countries, to empower persons with disabilities so that they can fully enjoy their

* CRPD/CSP/2013/1.

** Compiled on the basis of contributions by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other sources to facilitate the informal panel discussion to be held on 18 July 2013.

¹ WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011).

² Sophie Mitra, Alexandra Posarac and Brandon Vick, "Disability and poverty in developing countries: a snapshot from the world health survey" (forthcoming).

³ International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and WHO, *CBR: A Strategy for Rehabilitation, Equalization of Opportunities, Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities* (WHO, Geneva, 2004).



human rights and advance their status in society. They are implemented through a combined effort of persons with disabilities, their families and communities and the relevant Government departments dealing with health, education, vocational training and social and other services.

3. The ultimate goal of community-based rehabilitation and habilitation is to facilitate community-based inclusive development by, for and with persons with disabilities and their communities. As such, it is a comprehensive and multisectoral community-based approach that is implemented to contribute, in practical terms, at the community level, to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to support the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. With this approach, the concept of community-based inclusive development hinges on three aspects, according to which all development initiatives should: (a) be community-based and inclusive of persons with disabilities; (b) be centred on disabled persons and the community; and (c) address the needs of persons with disabilities, their families and their communities.

4. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation can be adapted to suit different contexts and to address concerns on a wide range of issues, such as independent living and integration into the community, personal mobility, education, health, habilitation and rehabilitation, work and employment, adequate standards of living and social protection, and participation in political and public life, as well as in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports.

5. Based on the results of needs assessments and resource availability, community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes often focus on three specific priorities: (a) promoting community-based, inclusive development that assists in mainstreaming disability in key development initiatives and, in particular, poverty reduction; (b) supporting stakeholders to meet the basic needs and enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families by improving access to the health, education, livelihood and social sectors; and (c) encouraging stakeholders to facilitate the empowerment of persons with disabilities and their families by promoting their inclusion and participation in development and decision-making processes.

6. An informal panel to be held on 18 July 2013 during the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will explore the role and contribution of community-based rehabilitation and habilitation in ensuring an adequate standard of living, in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their communities and in building an inclusive society. The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for concrete actions and efforts to promote disability-inclusive development. These efforts must reach out to everyone everywhere and especially to those who are most in need: persons with disabilities who are poor, vulnerable and live in rural areas or urban slums.

Normative frameworks

7. The right to an adequate standard of living is enshrined in a number of international instruments. Notably, it is highlighted in article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, which was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2008. Article 28 of the Convention addresses the need for an adequate standard of living and social protection; in it, the States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and commit themselves to taking appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.

8. Following the entry into force of the Convention, the General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions on realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities (see resolutions 62/127, 63/150, 64/131, 65/186, 66/124 and 67/140). In its resolution 63/150, the Assembly reaffirmed the need to include and integrate the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities in development efforts, without which the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, would not be genuinely achieved.

9. To address the multidimensional aspect of poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals, a community-based rehabilitation matrix and guidelines⁴ were developed to provide a common framework, as well as practical implementation strategies for programmes. The framework consists of five key components: health, education, livelihoods, social services and empowerment. The first four components relate to key development sectors, reflecting the multisectoral focus of community-based rehabilitation and habilitation. The final component relates to the empowerment of persons with disabilities, their families and communities, which is fundamental to ensuring access to and participation in all development sectors, an adequate standard of living and sustainable development, as well as the enjoyment of all human rights on an equal basis with others in the community.

Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation for an inclusive society

10. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation is about inclusive development. It is both a strategy and a process to include all underprivileged or disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities and their families. It has two major components: (a) a focus on society, for the removal of barriers to access; and (b) a focus on the persons who are excluded, to build their capacity and support them in lobbying for their inclusion (empowerment).

11. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes aim to create social change. Sustainable development and the empowerment of persons with disabilities are the nucleus of this change. Empowerment begins to happen when individuals or groups of people recognize that they have individual agency to change their situation and take action to that end. It is a process that involves

⁴ The guidelines, which were developed by WHO, ILO, UNESCO and the International Disability and Development Consortium, are available at www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/guidelines/en/index.html.

elements of self-awareness and capacity-building, which in turn lead to greater participation and decision-making power and to enhanced action for change.⁵

12. The empowerment of persons with disabilities and their families is the foundation of any community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programme. Such programmes can facilitate this process of empowerment by, for example, raising awareness about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and various development initiatives, providing information on how to access benefits, building capacity and encouraging participation, thereby promoting greater autonomy and involvement in decision-making for the development of communities.

13. The main priority for any community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programme is to address the basic needs of the persons with disabilities and their families. Usually, such programmes follow a three-pronged approach, as follows:

(a) Mainstreaming disability in development, especially in efforts to reduce poverty and ensure an adequate standard of living;

(b) Initiating disability-specific programmes to empower persons with disabilities and enhance their quality of life;

(c) Mainstreaming in reverse by implementing disability-specific programmes to include other disadvantaged groups and the community at large to ensure community participation and ownership.

14. There are different ways of implementing community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes, including locally, regionally and nationally. Such programmes can be managed by the national, regional or local governments or by civil society, including disabled peoples' organizations. Over the years, some countries have developed national community-based rehabilitation programmes with a view to reaching out to a majority of the targeted groups of persons with disabilities and ensuring that persons with disabilities have an adequate standard of living. For example, a national community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programme can empower persons with disabilities, their families and communities, regardless of caste, colour, creed, religion, gender, age or type and cause of disability, by raising awareness, promoting inclusion, reducing poverty, eliminating stigma, meeting basic needs and facilitating access to health, education and livelihood opportunities.⁶

15. Local governments or administrations play a significant role in the welfare of their citizens. Local governments are responsible for all their citizens, including persons with disabilities and their families living within their jurisdiction. Where community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes are run by the local government, the impact is comparatively more effective, especially in terms of ensuring an adequate standard of living and eliminating inequality and discrimination.

16. Where resources are limited, the local community and civil society often take the initiative to start a community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programme, primarily to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to meet their basic needs

⁵ Marilee Karl, *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision-Making* (London, Zed Books, 1995).

⁶ WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, *Regional Framework on Community-Based Rehabilitation* (WHO, 2010).

and enjoy rights as others do. Other stakeholders, especially self-help organizations and parents' groups, are also key players in initiating community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes; they initiate such programmes to ensure that children with disabilities are included in activities, including those relating to universal education.

17. In all cases, community participation and ownership are the basic requirements of sustainable development, as what is good for persons with disabilities is good for everyone. When a local community builds a wider bridge so that wheelchair users too can access it, everybody benefits. When a community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programme makes local public water and sanitation facilities accessible, everyone in the community benefits. Disability-specific programmes, especially those community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes that generate benefits for all, enjoy greater community participation and community ownership.

18. States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have committed themselves to treating persons with disabilities as subjects with the same rights as any other person. States need to adapt their national legislation to the international standards laid out in the treaty and, more importantly, to implement the Convention through concrete actions and measures in order to ensure that the benefits of the Convention reach everyone everywhere, especially those most in need. States also need to take action at all levels, from the national to the community level. Investing in community-based rehabilitation and habilitation could help in this process.

19. Although progress has been made, community-based rehabilitation and habilitation still faces two major challenges. First, there are few national-level community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes and, within countries, there are inequalities among persons with disabilities of the same socioeconomic and cultural background, which means that community-based rehabilitation and habilitation activities should be more responsive to the needs of all persons with disabilities. Second, there is a need for improving multisectoral collaboration, as has been proved by efforts for poverty eradication, the achievement of universal education and ensuring an adequate standard of living.

20. Entering into public, private and people partnerships is becoming an effective strategy to overcome the shortcomings of programmes, especially where resources are limited. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation often facilitates collaboration and cooperation among the public, private and civil society sectors, as resource sharing is the key to success and leads to sustainable development. In some community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes, Governments support personnel costs, civil society bears material costs and manages the programme, and family members and local communities volunteer. These combined efforts ensure that persons with disabilities have an adequate standard of living even in the most disadvantaged situations, in both rural and urban areas. In many countries where community-based rehabilitation and habilitation programmes are run by civil society or local groups, these actors often play a key role as a bridge or link between government development programmes and persons with disabilities.

21. Although the community-based rehabilitation approach is mostly practiced in developing countries, it is relevant for the whole world. It is a flexible, dynamic and adaptable development strategy that can be tailored to local contexts and realities. Not all community-based rehabilitation programmes in all countries need to apply

all five components of the matrix mentioned in paragraph 9 above. The fundamentals of such programmes, including reaching out to everyone everywhere, ensuring a better quality of life, mainstreaming disability, promoting the empowerment of persons with disabilities and their families and enhancing community involvement, participation and ownership, are however, applicable to all countries and communities.

22. Community-based rehabilitation and habilitation needs greater support and investment from Member States to implement the Convention and ensure that persons with disabilities become active contributors, not passive receivers. As highlighted by the General Assembly, to genuinely achieve all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, a greater effort must be made now to include the 1 billion persons with disabilities (over 15 per cent of the world's population) in mainstream development frameworks and agendas.

Questions for consideration

23. The following questions are presented for consideration:

- What measures have been taken by Member States to ensure that their national development policies and programmes guarantee an adequate standard of living for all persons with disabilities?
- What specific community-based rehabilitation and habilitation measures have been taken to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities? Please share examples of how these have contributed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities and of others in society.
- What can be done by Member States, the United Nations and international development organizations to further promote community-based rehabilitation as a strategy to ensure an adequate standard of living and empower persons with disabilities to participate in society and development?
- Innovative approaches such as public-private partnerships involving disabled peoples' organizations or self-help groups can play an important role in empowering persons with disabilities and creating inclusive communities. How can such approaches be encouraged and supported by Member States?
- What measures should be proposed at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development, to be held on 23 September 2013, to ensure that the internationally agreed development goals for the post-2015 framework adequately embrace community-based rehabilitation and habilitation as a strategy to reduce poverty and guarantee an adequate standard of living?